

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03 EB-11 MC-02 OMB-01 SSO-00

NSCE-00 DRC-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIE-00 INRE-00 /087 W

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O P 111010Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5654

INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

DA WASHDC PRIORITY

CINCEUR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 5450

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, SA

SUBJ: SAUDI NATIONAL GUARD

REF: STATE 238584

1. AMBASSADOR PAID INITIAL COURTESY CALL ON PRINCE ABDULLA IBN ABDUL AZIZ, COMMANDER OF THE SAUDI ARABIAN NATIONAL GUARD (SANG), ON DECEMBER 8 IN RIYADH. AFTER INITIAL EXCHANGE OF PLEASANTRIES, ABDULLA EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT OVER DELAYS IN PRESENTATION OF THE USG PROPOSAL TO MODERNIZE THE SANG AND STATED HIS HOPE THAT THE DELAYS DID NOT RESULT FROM ANY ZIONIST INFLUENCE OR CHANGE IN USG POLICY. AFTER REASSURANCES FROM THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE DELAYS WERE PURELY ADMINISTRATIVE IN NATURE AND THAT THERE WAS NO CHANGE TO OUR POLICY, THE CONVERSATION BROADENED INTO A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE ARAB/ISRAELI PROBLEM. AMBASSADOR STRESSED REQUIREMENT FOR PATIENCE AND COOPERATION FROM ALL SIDES. ABDULLA STRESSED HIS CONVICTION IN THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S SUPPORT OF JUSTICE.

2. AMBASSADOR MENTIONED OIL EMBARGO AS A QUARREL AMONG FRIENDS WHICH MUST BE OVERCOME AND SOLVED, BUT STRESSED OUR MANY MUTUAL INTERESTS AND AS AN EXAMPLE OUR COMMITMENT TO ASSIST IN
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MODERNIZING THE SANG. TO THAT END AMBASSADOR ASSURED ABDULLA

THAT THE PROGRAM MANAGER WOULD ARRIVE IN COUNTRY MOMENTARILY AND COULD PRESENT THE USG PROPOSAL AT THE END OF THE WEEK. AN APPOINTMENT WAS SET FOR DECEMBER 13 FOR THE PRESENTATION.

3. ABDULLA WAS PLEASED AND ON HIS PART STATED WE SHOULD IGNORE ANY AND ALL RUMORS CIRCULATING AROUND TOWN THAT THE SANG MIGHT TURN ELSEWHERE FOR ASSISTANCE. ALL SUCH RUMORS WERE STARTED BY ARMS SALESMEN TO THEIR OWN ENDS. KING FAISAL AND HE BOTH DESIRED THAT THE USG UNDERTAKE THE MODERNIZATION.

4. PRINCE ABDULLA WILL GO OUT IN THE DESERT STARTING DECEMBER 22 ON HIS ANNUAL TRIP CIRCULATING AMONG THE TRIBES, MAINTAINING SAG CONTACTS, AND DISBURSING PATRONAGE PAYMENTS. HOPEFULLY ANY MAJOR ISSUES CAN BE RESOLVED PRIOR TO THAT TIME.

5. IN EARLIER CALL SAME DAY AMBASSADOR INFORMED PRINCE FAHD THAT HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING THIS MATTER WITH PRINCE ABDALLA. FAHD COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS FINE AND HE WAS PLEASED THAT THE PROJECT WAS GOING AHEAD.

6. COMMENT: ABDULLA'S REASSURANCES ON THE "RUMORS" CAME ONLY AFTER HIS DOUBTS WERE PUT TO REST. WE BELIEVE IT REMAINS SAG POLICY TO MAINTAIN CURRENT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TIES WITH THE USG, BUT ABDULLA UNDOUBTEDLY HAS ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS IN HAND FROM OTHERS SUCH AS THE FRENCH.

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